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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Oh Lord God Almighty, guide those to whom You have committed the Government of this Nation. Give special gifts of wisdom and understanding to the leaders and members of our executive, legislative, and judicial branches of Government, empowering them to uphold what is right and to follow what is true.

Lord, strengthen them to obey Your holy will and to fulfill Your divine intentions. Imbue them with integrity of purpose and unfailing devotion to Your plans. May they promote the welfare of all our citizens, redressing social wrongs and relieving the oppressed. Help them to work together with one heart to secure equality of opportunity and due reward for all.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 7, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am sure it is difficult for people who live outside the Washington, DC, area to understand why we are not going to be able to have a couple votes this morning. I have not had a chance to speak with the Republican leader. I apologize. There is nothing to apologize for, I just have not had the opportunity to do that, or to talk to the two managers of the bill. But in Washington, it is different than a lot of places. We have several bridges that feed into this area coming from Virginia. A lot of the staff and Senators live in Virginia when they are here attending sessions of Congress.

To make a long story short, we have essential staff who are not here right now. We have Senators—at least one Senator stuck on a train because of the bad weather. As I say, it might be difficult for people who see a lot of snow all the time to understand why an inch or two or three of snow causes all these problems, but it does. It has been that way and will continue to be that way.

Because of that, I am going to ask consent that the votes scheduled to occur at 10 a.m. occur later this after-

noon. We will try to do it at about 1 o'clock. One reason we cannot back the votes up is because we have a joint session of Congress with King Abdullah, the King of Jordan, who has been such a good ally—he and his father—of our country, and a lot of us are looking forward to hearing that speech he is going to deliver.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the votes scheduled to occur at 10 a.m. occur later this afternoon. I will work with the Republican leader to make sure it is a time that is convenient.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would say the two votes we had lined up we have been wanting to do for a while, the one offered by the manager of the bill, Senator COLLINS, and the one offered by Senator MCCASKILL. We will try to do those votes first and then move on to other matters.

Staffs are also working to see if we can come up with an agreement on the nongermane amendments. We have a number of nongermane amendments on both sides. We are going to try to set up votes on those. One of the things we have to make sure is covered in any consent agreement is, if we do vote on these nongermane amendments, it does not change what would be germane postcloture because, in fact, if we did not do that, there would be a lot of things that would be germane postcloture that should not be attached to this bill. But we have very able staff who can work on this along with the managers of the bill.

I again apologize to everyone, but those are the facts of life in the bitter winter of an inch of snow in Washington.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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